CE

TRACKING & ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Simple checks for straighter cuts, smoother lumber, and longer blade life.

Why Tracking & Alignment Matter

A bandsaw blade needs to run in the correct position on the band wheels and pass through properly adjusted guides. Poor tracking or alignment can contribute to wandering cuts, uneven lumber, excess heat, and shortened blade life.

1 Start With the Blade

- Inspect the blade for cracks, kinks, damaged teeth, or an uneven weld before making adjustments.
- Make sure the blade is clean. Pitch and sawdust buildup can affect how the blade runs through the guides.
- Confirm the blade is the correct length and width for your mill.
- If the blade is badly damaged, replace it before troubleshooting the mill setup.

2 Check Blade Tracking on the Band Wheels

- With the mill safely shut down, verify that the blade is sitting in the proper position on both band wheels.
- Rotate the wheels by hand only if your manufacturer allows it, and watch whether the blade stays in a consistent position.
- If the blade walks forward or backward on the wheel, follow your mill manufacturer's tracking adjustment procedure.
- Do not use tracking adjustments to compensate for a damaged blade or worn wheel components.

3 Verify Blade Tension

- Use the tension recommended by your mill manufacturer for your blade size and mill model.
- Too little tension can allow the blade to flex or wander in the cut.
- Excessive tension can increase stress on the blade, bearings, and other mill components.
- Recheck tension after changing blades or when cut quality suddenly changes.

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Check the mill setup before blaming the blade.

4 Inspect the Blade Guides

- Check that guide bearings or guide blocks are clean, secure, and not excessively worn.
- Confirm the guides are positioned according to your mill manufacturer's specifications.
- Make sure the blade is not being pinched, twisted, or forced sideways by the guides.
- Check both guide assemblies so the blade is supported consistently across the cutting span.

5 Check Mill Alignment

- Inspect rails, bunks, blade guides, and cutting head components for anything loose, bent, or out of square.
- Make sure logs are sitting securely on the bunks and are properly clamped before cutting.
- If boards are consistently thicker on one side, compare the blade path to the mill bed and bunks.
- If your mill has recently been moved or repaired, recheck alignment before troubleshooting the blade.

6 Watch the Cut

- Slow the feed rate and see whether the blade stays straighter through the log.
- Watch for the blade diving, climbing, or consistently pulling to one side.
- Listen for rubbing, squealing, or other unusual sounds near the guides or band wheels.
- If the mill setup checks out but the blade still wanders, inspect tooth sharpness and tooth set.

Good to Know

Tracking, tension, and guide adjustments are mill-specific. Use this guide as a troubleshooting checklist, then follow the adjustment procedure and specifications for your exact mill model.

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TRACKING & ALIGNMENT CHECKLIST

A quick reference to use in the shop.

Quick Troubleshooting Checklist

- [ ] Blade is clean and free of visible damage
- [ ] Blade is positioned correctly on both band wheels
- [ ] Blade tension matches manufacturer recommendations
- [ ] Guides are aligned, secure, and not pinching the blade
- [ ] Mill bed, rails, and cutting head appear square and secure
- [ ] Log is properly supported and clamped
- [ ] Feed rate is not forcing the blade through the cut
- [ ] Tooth set and sharpness have been checked if wandering continues

When the Setup Looks Right but the Cut Still Wanders

If tracking, tension, guides, and mill alignment all check out, the problem may be in the blade itself. Uneven tooth set, dull teeth, or blade damage can cause a blade to drift even when the mill is adjusted correctly.

Need Professional Blade Service?

Cutting Edge Sawmill provides bandsaw blade sharpening and setting. If your blade needs attention, use the Request Blade Service form on cuttingedgesawmill.com.

Related Resources

- Blade Care & Maintenance Guide
- Tooth Set Problems Guide
- Sawmill Blade Troubleshooting
- Sawmill Guides & Downloads